

MASSACHUSETTS SAFE COMMUNITIES COALITION

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Support the Safe Communities Act

[S.1510](#) (Sens. Eldridge and Miranda), [H.2218](#) (Reps. Balser and Cruz)

For over 20 years, every federal administration, Democratic and Republican alike, has relied on state and local law enforcement to help identify and deport immigrants, disproportionately impacting communities of color in our Commonwealth.

This misuse of state resources continues to separate families and undermine community trust in our public institutions. That's why California, Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington State have all passed similar laws.

Federal civil immigration enforcement is not our job.

If we are to provide stability and protection for immigrant families, Massachusetts must set its own course.

The Safe Communities Act:

Prohibits questioning by court and police officials about immigration status.

Enables immigrant workers, domestic violence survivors, tenants, and others to report exploitation, abuse and other crimes to public safety authorities without fear of immigration consequences.

Protects basic rights, just like a "Miranda" warning.

ICE officials regularly visit our jails and correctional facilities to identify people for deportation, including those not convicted of any crime. The SCA requires written, informed consent before any ICE interrogation, and ensures that people in local custody know their right to decline such interviews or to have their own attorney present. Without these safeguards, people often jeopardize their immigration cases – even signing their own deportation orders.

Protects access to justice in our courts.

Current practice undermines our court system by allowing ICE to detain people before they have their day in court, denying justice to victims and defendants alike. The SCA prohibits police and court officials from initiating contact with ICE about a person's pending release from police or court custody, except at the end of a sentence of incarceration. It does not otherwise restrict communications with ICE.

Prohibits agreements that deputize local officials as federal immigration agents, at state taxpayers' expense.

287(g) contracts with ICE damage the relationship between immigrant communities and law enforcement. And they are expensive. Barnstable, Bristol, and Plymouth county sheriffs have declined to continue these contracts, leaving the MA Department of Corrections as the sole outlier. Nationally, only 5 state DOCs have 287(g) contracts. The other four are Alaska, Arizona, Florida, and Georgia.

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Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition